

The Power

THIS TRANSCRIPT WAS TYPED FROM A TELEDIPHONE RECORDING AND NOT COPIED FROM AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT: BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF MIS-HEARING AND THE DIFFICULTY, IN SOME CASES, OF IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL SPEAKERS, THE BBC CANNOT VOUCH FOR ITS ACCURACY.

PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST
On Behalf of
THE LABOUR PARTY

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TIMOTHY WEST: Our soldiers, sailors and airmen are the finest in the world, their record of defending their country is second to none, and now they have got another battle on their hands, a battle that they should not have to fight, to get the arms equipment and training they need to do their jobs. Why is that? The answer lies here. Trident Two, the next nuclear missile system, which this government has decided to buy, the bill for this will be more than ten billion pounds and the plain fact is that the only way Britain can afford it, is if we cut back on our conventional forces, that's the choice, either nuclear weapons or a modern defence force, we cannot pay for both.

The Tories have made their choice and they are going for nuclear missiles, so they are having to cut back spending on new conventional equipment by thirty per cent over the next few years. Now, let's take a look at what that means. Already the Army has been told to cut a hundred and forty five million pounds in arms and training next year, helpful to the Army would be additional anti-tank helicopter forces, here in Germany, but with the bill for Trident, there is no chance of that. And how is the Navy going to fair? Well, it seems likely to lose three of its fifty fighting ships and will have to make do with an increasingly aging fleet. All this is disastrous for the real job that we are needed for in NATO, looking after the Eastern Atlantic. And here we could do with more frigates, not fewer, of course, Trident is useless for these NATO tasks.

And what about our Airforce? It faces cut backs too, thanks to Trident. A batch of tornadoes it was expecting are being sold to Saudi Arabia, it will also have a long wait for the fighter aircrafts that it needs. What our Airforce could do with are more of those Harriers here in Germany, but the bill for Trident has put paid to that.

Well, what is wrong with relying on Trident missiles? For a start they are not ours, we have to buy them from America, unlike most of our tanks and ships and planes. If in the Iceland Summit President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev had agreed to get rid of all nuclear ballistic missiles within ten years, it would have been goodbye to Trident and the main plank of Mrs. Thatcher's Defence Policy, and she wouldn't even have been asked. So much for the independence of a nuclear deterrent. So if our nuclear weapons do not even buy us a seat at the super power meetings, which decide our destiny, what do they do for our defence?

Our submarine based nuclear arsenal adds up to only two per cent of what the super powers have, that means, of course, that for us to use our nuclear weapons, we here on this small island commit suicide. And don't let us deceive ourselves that perhaps we could fight and win a limited nuclear war. Chernobyl showed all too clearly that radiation knows no boundaries. Once even a small nuclear war starts, we are all in this corner of the world, all engulfed.

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Faced with those realities, Labour has made a choice, it has chosen a practical and effective alternative to our reliance on nuclear missiles, which are neither realistic nor credible. Labour's Policy is based first and foremost on an unshakeable commitment to the best defence possible of this country, this is what Neil Kinnock had to say to the British people the other day.

RT. HON NEIL KINNOCK MP: I hold it to be self evident that it is the first duty of any government to ensure the security of the country over which it governs, especially if they are elected to that government by democracy. That duty does not change in any age, and we will discharge that duty fully for this is our country and we defend our country, as we always have.

WEST: So Labour's Defence Policy is committed to NATO, after all, a Labour government helped to found it in the first place and Labour is committed to strengthening our conventional forces, not weakening them. Instead of the dangerous and damaging reliance on nuclear missiles, Labour has a policy that is relevant to this country's real defence needs and the likely threats it faces.

That's Labour's way, a way to a secure and modern Britain, a modern world, a power for good. If you want to know more about Labour's Defence Policy, write to:

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